



**State Senator  
Kirk Watson  
District 14**

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

*CONTACT:* Kate Alexander, Office of Senator Kirk Watson: (512) 463-0114

## **Watson offers school finance, education bills**

Sen. Kirk Watson this week filed a package of education-related legislation, including several bills aimed at ensuring the school finance system is both equitable for all districts and fair to districts that pay recapture.

"Everyone, including the Texas Supreme Court, knows our school finance is broken, and nothing in the court's decision last spring absolves the Legislature of its responsibility to fix that system for the good of Texans," Sen. Watson said. "We can't relegate the children of Texas to two more years in a broken system."

Sen. Watson has proposed several bills that would help a broad swath of school districts as well as others that are specific to "Robin Hood" districts.

**SB 356:** Raises the yield on "copper pennies" levied above a \$1.06 tax rate to the same value as the pennies in the first \$1.

**SB 360:** Requires the state to cover an equal share of transportation costs so that more dollars can go into educating students.

**SB 359:** Allows leased facilities and renovated buildings that have not previously been schools to qualify for the New Instructional Facilities Allotment, a change that could help both traditional public schools and charter schools.

**SB 358:** Allows "Robin Hood" school districts to apply their transportation costs against their recapture payment to the state, as is already done with other components of the formula such as the New Instructional Facilities Allotment.

**SB 357:** Creates a fairer system for districts required to pay recapture, by allowing them to receive the same benefit from the Transportation Allotment and the Cost of Education Index as other districts.

**SB 353:** Uses recapture funds as additional basic allotment, thereby increasing revenue to all schools equitably and ensuring recapture money is used for education and not to offset other state spending.

Last week, Sen. Watson filed SB 290 to ensure that state funding for public education does not decrease as property values rise.

Sen. Watson's other education-related bills would require a school district to establish a recess policy (SB 355) and facilitate "kindergarten-readiness" in all Texas children who are deaf or hard of hearing (SB 354).

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